NEWS

Free School Lunches for All

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER

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By Joyce Westner

When school starts in September, parents may be pleased to know that Massachusetts is funding free school lunches for all students. The program was started during the height of the pandemic, and according to

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an article in the Boston Globe, “The $172 million cost of the meals will be largely funded by the new surtax on incomes over $1 million. That means the onerous, senseless, three-tier lunch system we’ve taken as a given for decades — along with the stigma it slapped on our least lucky kids, and the endless red tape with which it burdened their educators — is history.”

The effort to provide free lunches was led by Project Bread, a Boston anti-hunger organization, whose president pointed out that there’s never been means testing for providing text books. She said the same is true for school buses, although in Winchester families must pay for busing, or ask for a waiver for those who can’t afford the costs. According to sponsors, one of the issues with free lunches is that students may feel embarrassed to get the lunches for free then don’t take them. And, “Hungry students don’t learn,” a statement the Boston Globe credits Congressman Jim McGovern, another anti-hunger campaigner.

Andrew Marron, the Winchester Public Schools Director of Finance and Operations told the Winchester News: "The WPS appreciates Governor Healey and State Legislator's efforts to make universal free school meals permanent. Since the program's trial implementation during COVID, WPS has seen an overall increase in meal utilization rates and encourages all families to participate this coming school year."

He added two notes on the program: "While breakfast and lunch will continue to be served at no cost to all students, second meals and a la carte items will be charged to student accounts at existing prices." And, "Even though meals will be free for all, it is very important for families to complete the household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals for the 2023-2024 school year. [They] can view and complete the application here: https://www.winchesterps.org/free-reduced. We strongly encourage ALL families to submit this form as it allows us to establish eligibility for state benefits, waive transportation fees for those who qualify, a families most effectively."

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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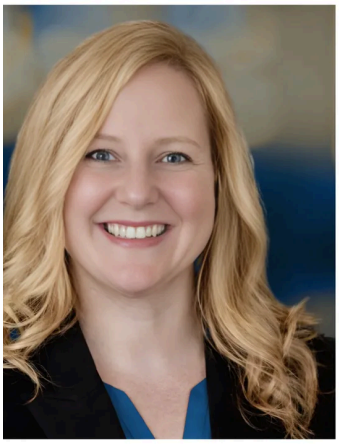

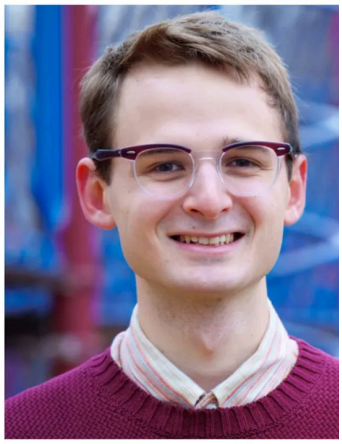

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

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March 4, 2026

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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